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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Sub-Commission on Prevention
of Discrimination and
Protection of Minorities
Forty-second session
Agenda item 15

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Note by the Chairman

The attention of the Sub-Commission is drawn to the letter dated 31 August 1990 addressed to the Chairman by the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations Office at Geneva and a letter of the same date in response.

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As you know, since the beginning of the current session of the Sub-Commission, I have maintained close contacts with you, with the Chairman of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes, and with the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Jan Martenson, and officials of the Centre for Human Rights. I took the initiative of establishing and maintaining these contacts, at the request of the Government of Canada, in order to keep you informed about the Government's efforts to ensure a peaceful resolution of the situation at Oka-Kanesatake and Kahnawake in a manner respecting the human rights of all persons concerned.

I want to convey to you and Mrs. Daes my personal appreciation and that of my Government for the responsible fashion in which you have addressed this very delicate matter throughout the session.

As indicated in a statement by the Canadian Delegation to the Sub-Commission on 29 August, those institutions established in Canada to ensure respect for the human rights of all citizens will continue to perform their functions openly as further events pertaining to this situation unfold.

In this context, I want to indicate to you my intention of pursuing ongoing contacts on this subject with Under-Secretary-General Martenson and his officials in Geneva after the conclusion of the current session of the Sub-Commission. The purpose of these contacts will be to keep the Centre for Human Rights and, through the Centre, yourself and Mrs. Daes fully informed of developments relating to events at Oka-Kanesatake and Kahnawake, particularly as they relate to the protection of the human rights of everyone concerned. I trust that this will enable you to continue to apprise the Sub-Commission of developments as they relate to genuine questions of human rights in whatever manner you consider appropriate.

(Signed) Gerald E. Shannon
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

I have the honour to refer to your letter of 31 August 1990 by which you kindly propose arrangements to continue to keep me informed in my capacity of Chairman of the Forty-second Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of any developments regarding the situation in Oka-Kanesatake and Kahnawake in Canada.

I welcome your suggestion and I should like to take this opportunity to express to you, my appreciation for the efforts that you have made to ensure that the Sub-Commission was kept informed of developments, thereby permitting the Sub-Commission to have before it timely information on Canada's efforts to ensure a peaceful resolution of the situation in a manner respecting the human rights of all concerned.

May I permit the hope that your attitude has contributed to setting a precedent to be followed by others in assisting United Nations human rights organs to achieve an objective understanding of questions brought to their attention.

(Signed) Danilo Türk
Chairman
Sub-Commission on Prevention
of Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities